

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th May 2012 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer (from 2012/6057)
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	The Hon R Montagu	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Co-opted Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer	

IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister (to 2012/2060)
	Mr C Draper	VGS Manager (to 2012/2060)

APOLOGIES: None

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2012/6053	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
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The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18th April 2012 were approved.

2012/6054	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
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The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, including Mr Readhead, and Mrs Thorne all declared an interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in matters concerning campsites.

2012/6055	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
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The Head Agister reported that the Welfare Tour which took place on Thursday, 10th May went very well. The animals looked better than might have been expected given the extremely wet and cold April and early May. A lot of animals were seen and, considering the weather, all looked well. The positive comments from the welfare organisation representatives who were present were nice to hear.

The grass is growing well now and the ponies are improving. The odd mare with a new foal has had to be removed but on the whole the young ponies have turned the corner and are definitely looking better.

Mr Deakin, Chairman of the Staff Committee, agreed with the Head Agister's report. He added that he was a little concerned prior to the Welfare Tour because of the very bad weather, but on the day the animals all looked better than had been expected.

One of the RSPCA Inspectors present on the Tour commented that they acknowledge the condition of feral animals will vary according to the seasons. In the past, this has sometimes been an issue as people expect the ponies to be in fat condition all year round. The Inspector's comment was therefore welcomed.

2012/6056 STALLIONS

DISCHARGE

Ten stallions were turned out on Saturday, 12th May. They will run out for four weeks and are due to be brought back off the Forest on Sunday 10th June. It is hoped they will stay in the areas where they have been turned out. A report was received of a grey stallion at Ipley which shouldn't be there. The Head Agister said he will check with the local Agister.

Mr A Gerrelli joined the meeting.

2012/6057 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST

RESUME

Mares with foals	8	Fillies (2, 3 yr olds)	19
Mares with yearlings	3	Donkeys	2
Mares on their own	12		
Total in April	44		
Total year to date	180	Total year to date previous year	248

2012/6058 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE

RESUME

	Forest	Common	Total	Total (previous yr)
Ponies	3953	788	4741	4378
Cattle	1511	855	2366	2011
Donkeys	86	66	152	123
Pigs	0	102	102	24
Sheep	0	136	136	130
TOTALS	5550	1947	7497	6666
Total PCD	5550	1709	7259	6512

2012/6059 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

Pig at Brockenhurst & Feeding of Ponies at Nomansland

The Pig has not been seen out again. No further complaint has been received regarding the feeding of ponies at Nomansland. It was therefore decided that these two matters should be discharged.

2012/6060 VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME - REPORT BY THE VGS MANAGER, MR COLIN DRAPER

RESUME

A copy of the VGS Manager's Report to the Advisory Group on 10th May 2012 was circulated.

Mr Draper reported that the deadline for entry into the scheme has been extended and there are a few more applications to come. The extension was agreed as it seems that some applications have been lost in the post and some commoners telephoned with valid reasons why they had been unable to send their papers in by the original deadline.

78% of eligible commoners have now joined the scheme.

90% of the stock turned out is now in the scheme.

140 commoners who have not joined only account for 400 animals.

Reports received back from Commoners have been positive. Some of the commoners who have not joined only have a few animals and of those, several have said they do not need the money and would rather it was spent on those who do!

The quarter acre rule has not proved to be an issue after all. No commoner has been restricted by the rule and only a handful are on the bare minimum to qualify for entry.

The interim payment due to those commoners who were in the old CSS has regrettably been delayed as a result of the deadline for joining the VGS being extended. It is hoped payments will now be made in June.

The Head Agister and Mr Draper left the meeting.

2012/6061 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS

RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)
Mr Richard Price, Assistant Area Land Agent

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2012/6062 ADDITIONAL CYCLE ROUTES ON THE FOREST

Further consideration was given to the proposals contained in the presentment made by the Recreational Management Strategy Working Group in the March Court as well as those of the NFA, CDA and Mr Brian Ingram which raised objections to the proposals, and that of Mr Hart who expressed his support.

It is clear from the Presentments that have been heard that a significant number of people in the Forest are concerned at the detrimental effect cycling off the waymarked cycle network is having on the Forest.

The proposed Ashley Walk car park to Hampton Ridge route passes through the previously identified 'Tranquil Area'. The Court feels strongly that the concept of the Tranquil Areas should not be abandoned and it was suggested that a policy of keeping some parts of the Forest free of cycling should be encouraged.

The Bolderwood Ornamental Drive to the Portugese Fireplace route has a significant length of grass/dirt track. The Court was adamant that no surfacing of grass/dirt tracks should be permitted in order to accommodate cycle routes. The greater part of this route had already been rejected by the Court only two years ago.

In summary, the Court agreed unanimously that cycling is currently not being effectively managed and the proposed new routes will not improve that situation. The Court will not, therefore, support the trial of the proposed two new cycle routes. It does, however, wish to encourage the Recreational Management Strategy Working Group to design and introduce a robust system of monitoring.

The Court may, however, consider new routes in the future, if by doing so, the overall length of the waymarked cycle network is not increased and there is an overall benefit to the Forest. This could be achieved, for example, by closing a damaging route and approving a new one which is less harmful to the Forest and more convenient to users.

The introduction of Community Cycle Champions is considered to be a positive step towards the proper management of cycling in the Forest and the Court felt they should be encouraged.

Formal consent for changes to the waymarked cycle network requires the Forestry Commission to submit detailed proposals to the Court.

2012/6063 SHEEP ON THE NORTHERN COMMONS

The Atlas of Common Rights over the Added Areas, which was drawn up by the Forestry Commission following the passing of the New Forest Act of 1964, records the right of pasture only. However, the National Trust has permitted sheep to be grazed on its commons in the north of the Forest for many years. In view of this, the Court agreed it would be difficult to alter the position now.

Mr Cook is mistaken when he says that sheep have not been turned out in the Forest in the past twenty years. Sheep have been depastured on the Forest during that time, albeit that sheep rights are not widespread across the Forest. It was agreed that the issue of sheep on the Northern Commons will not be pursued.

Regarding marking fees, providing the sheep spend less than 25% of their time on the Forest, the Common rate of marking fee will apply. If, however, the animals move onto the Forest for 25% or more of the time, the Forest rate of marking fee will be due.

2012/6064 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

I am pleased to report that there has been a good entry into the new Verderers Grazing Scheme which commenced on 1st March this year. Under the terms of our agreement with Natural England, the Verderers had to maximise the number of active commoners that are members of the new Verderers Grazing Scheme to cover at least 75% of depastured stock. Some application forms have yet to be processed, and we already have 89% of the animals turned out on the Crown Lands.

2012/6065 ELECTION OF VERDERERS

In November we will be conducting an election for two of the elected Verderers. Dionis Macnair's current term as an elected Verderer comes to an end. David Readhead's term as co-opted Verderer after the sad death of Jeff Kitcher also comes to an end. Of course both are entitled to stand for election in November. In the meantime our Clerk Sue Westwood will shortly begin the difficult process of updating the electoral roll.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2012/6066 THE ROAD ACCIDENT REPORT FOR APRIL 2012

The Agisters attended 4 accidents in April in which 2 animals died - a pony and a donkey. In April last year 10 accidents were reported.

A roan pony mare, was killed on the B3054 at Hilltop on 8th April at 11.45 p.m., by a Taxi driver from Southampton.

The coloured yearling donkey died in Sowley Lane, East End. She was found at 7.30 on the morning of the 16th. This was a hit and run so we don't know what time the accident happened.

Nothing was found injured following a collision at Brook, reported to Police at 8.46 on the evening of the 12th April. The driver of a Peugeot 407 from Stratford upon Avon reported having had an accident with a cow, but a witness said it was a donkey!

We were told that a pony had been involved in an accident on the C10 near Setthorns on the evening of the 11th April. Nothing was found injured, which was fortunate as no one has come forward to admit responsibility.

3 accidents occurred after dark, the 4th in failing light.

We would of course very much like to identify the driver who left the young donkey dead in

Sowley Lane. Given the location, one has to wonder if it was a local driver who was responsible. Remember the Hit and Run Reward Scheme will pay up to £1,000 for information which leads to the conviction of a driver who has failed to report such an accident.

The total number of animals killed and injured to the end of April this year is 20. Last year by this time, 25 animals had been killed or injured. Let us hope the downward trend continues.

Finally, I am very pleased to be able to say that no accidents have occurred in the past three weeks and it would be lovely if motorists would continue to drive carefully in the Forest.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE ACTING DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

There were no presentments on behalf of the Deputy Surveyor

PRESENTMENTS

2012/6067 LATCHMORE STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT
Presentment by Mr John Fryer

My name is John Fryer, I was born in Hyde 74yrs ago. I have lived in the Parish 68 of those years, worked directly for the Forest Commission, and contracted throughout the Forest. Foresters I worked under such as Alistair Holloway, Jack Green, Aubrey James, to name just a few, would be dismayed at what is happening in the Forest today. I am sure they would be horrified by the Latchmore project.

The few years I spent away from the area, in the army and in Australia, I could not get England out of my mind. The thought of standing at Fir Pound (which by the way I replanted for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977) and looking towards Hazley, Sloden and Alderhill enclosures, with Latchmore in the centre, has always confirmed to me that this is England, this is the New Forest, and this is my home. The thought of this area being wrecked is terrible for me. Myself and other older residents who were also born here in Hyde Parish dispute the claim that the Brook was moved between Alderhill and the crossing, this is upheld by maps dating back 200 years.

Latchmore Brook is not a deep manmade drain as the Forestry Commission likes to portray it, but a gently meandering stream, which overflows onto it's floodplain during wet periods, as it should and which has been plainly shown recently. In my opinion the last thing it needs is to be filled up with 10 thousand tons of heather bales and foreign gravel, forcing it completely and permanently onto it's floodplain.

I can see no benefits from this project. Grazing will be reduced, so also with access for stock, because it will be more swampy. I understand that this site is protected by SSSI, SAC, SPA, and RAMSAR status.

The project poses serious risks to the wildlife habitat, with the felling of trees and movements of huge machinery. Sea trout come up from the Avon to spawn in the existing stream in early summer. Can you or the other bodies guarantee that this will continue if this scheme goes ahead?

The bog by Alderhill will be damaged, by the need to access the Brook with heavy machinery, gravel and heather bales for the infill.

How can this be restoration?

The Verderers should not be supporting this scheme, especially as they have received so many complaints about other so called "restorations", for instance Buckherd

Bottom, Pinnick Wood, Amberslade Bottom, Ditchend Brook, Highland Water.

As the Forestry Commission receives payment from the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme for this work, more stringent monitoring should be done by the Verderers, Natural England and the National Park Authority to protect this very special area, by following up these schemes, making sure that best practice is adhered to, that they are working and maintained, before new projects are approved. As custodians of the Open Forest, I ask you to use the powers invested in you to stop this ill conceived scheme, which I, and very many others believe will be a disaster, destroying the Latchmore habitat for decades, if not for ever.

2012/6068 LATCHMORE STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT
Presentment by Professor John Shepherd CBE FRS on behalf of the Friends of Latchmore

My name is John Shepherd. I am a Professorial Research Fellow in Earth System Science at the University of Southampton. I am a Fellow of the Royal Society, and I was a member of the study group that produced its report on The Future of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in 2001. I was a member of the DEFRA Science Advisory Council from 2002 to 2010. In my spare time I chair independent reviews of Environmental Impact Assessments and decommissioning plans prepared for the offshore oil industry. I am not a terrestrial ecologist, but I do have considerable experience concerning evidence-based policy and good practice in environmental protection and management.

Today I am presenting to you the views of the Friends of Latchmore, a group of well over 100 people, both residents and visitors, who object to the planned "restoration" of the Latchmore Brook as part of the New Forest HLS scheme. This involves importing about 10 000 tonnes of gravel in order to fill in much of the existing stream bed, and to relocate it in an alternative course just a few yards away. We object to this project mainly because it is not at all clear what is actually wrong with the stream at present, nor whether or not the proposed reconstruction works will actually help to fix any problems that may exist. As a scientist and as a citizen I am horrified that this could happen in such a beautiful and highly protected place. The Verderers have supported this project, based on its claimed ecological benefits. My presentment today explains that there is in fact little or no evidence to support these claims for the Latchmore Brook. Your support as Verderers has been based on unsupported assertions and misrepresented information. In particular:

1. The overall assessment that the ecological status of the stream (and adjacent ecosystems) is "unfavourable" is dubious and cannot now be verified, because the ecological survey records on which it was based are now apparently missing (probably lost or destroyed). No attempt has been made to re-survey the area, so there is no evidence of any problems that may exist.
2. The course of the stream was last modified during the 1950s and 1960s. It has therefore now been recovering naturally for at least 50 years, and it has now most probably reached a new semi-natural equilibrium. Nobody has produced any evidence that its status is deteriorating, or that it will not continue to improve by natural processes without intervention.
3. Nobody can say what are the precise ecological objectives of the works to be undertaken: i.e. which habitats and/or species are intended to benefit, nor where, nor to what extent.
4. No studies have been undertaken to provide any evidence that the planned works will actually achieve their objectives (if anyone actually knew what they were).
5. There is no plan to monitor the present or the future status of the stream, so it will never be possible to demonstrate whether or not the objectives have been achieved.

6. It is asserted that there is no legal requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the project, but no justification for this assertion has been provided. There is no specific exemption for "restoration" work within an SSSI. Even if there were, DEFRA guidance on good environmental practice would require one for such a substantial intervention (and this was specifically recognised when a generic assessment was produced in 2006).
7. It is asserted that detailed site-specific studies have been undertaken, but no-one has been able to produce any reports or other documentary evidence of the results of such studies.
8. No Comparative Analysis of the balance between the damage that will be caused and the benefits that may be obtained has been undertaken. There is therefore no way to know whether the benefits are greater than the damage, nor whether substantially similar benefits could be obtained by means of some less heavy-handed and damaging intervention.

We have asked repeatedly for evidence that any of these serious issues have been considered in any satisfactory way, but nobody has been able or willing to provide any of this information. We have been repeatedly told that the partners have 15 years of experience of successful restoration, but since no surveys or monitoring have been carried out there is no evidence to support this. Our own observations of previous restoration projects show that the results are in many cases highly unsatisfactory.

We consider that the planning and execution of this project are clearly in violation of the DEFRA guidelines for the management of SSSIs (2003). Moreover, DEFRA is committed at the highest levels to evidence-based policy and best practice, and the present conduct of works within the New Forest SSSI under the HLS scheme is a lamentable failure to apply these principles by the agencies involved.

In March we sent to the Verderers and all HLS partners a list of 25 questions that we consider need to be satisfactorily answered before the project could be considered to be credible. In return we have received nothing except a general Q&A document prepared by the Forestry Commission, that answers their own questions, not ours. We have responded with a detailed and critical analysis of their Q&A document, but we have not yet received any response to these comments. We have also prepared a detailed analysis of the extent to which it addresses our questions, which concludes that it answers none of them satisfactorily, and that it fails to answer 20 out of the 25 in any way at all.

We regard this situation as wholly unsatisfactory and unacceptable, and we are now referring these departures from best practice and failures to implement relevant legislation to the appropriate national and EU authorities, and considering applying for a Judicial Review, and making a formal Complaint to the European Commission. We have also pointed out that the HLS Board's decision to proceed with the project was based on erroneous information about the state of public opinion about it, and we have repeatedly asked the Verderers and the Forestry Commission to suspend further work on the Latchmore project until all these issues have been properly investigated and a satisfactory outcome reached.

It is inevitable that any attempt to resume the works this summer will result in a major and very public dispute, that will create extremely bad publicity for the New Forest HLS scheme and for all of the partner organisations involved. This could still be avoided avoided if the Court of Verderers and its HLS partners were to suspend the project now.

The situation can therefore be simply summarised. It is proposed to import 10 000 tons of gravel and dump it in the bed of a charming and biodiverse stream without any attempt to determine whether or not this is actually necessary, or whether or not it would be beneficial, and what damage it may do. This is not just a classic case of brute force and ignorance. It is brute force and *wilful* ignorance.

I am aware that the practice of this Court is not to reconsider matters unless there is new evidence to be considered. The new evidence I have presented to you today is that the original information on which you decided to support this scheme was seriously deficient and in one important respect erroneous. On any proper and objective analysis the evidence available is completely inadequate for intervention works of this magnitude.

My presentment today, supported by the views of over 100 like-minded people, therefore asks you to suspend this work now, until a proper environmental assessment and comparative analysis specific to the Latchmore have been carried out..We believe that such an analysis will show that the work is not necessary and that the damage caused will far outweigh any possible benefits.

The Verderers and the HLS partners still have an opportunity to avoid a storm of public opposition and criticism, that will damage their reputations and those of the organisations they represent, by suspending work on this project, and I urge you to do so now.

2012/6069 SHEEP

Presentment by Mr Geordie Cooke

Mr Cooke returned to the Court to express dissatisfaction with the Official Verderer's announcement in response to his March Presentment concerning sheep depastured on the Northern Commons and he referred to a letter he has recently written to the Official Verderer attempting to explain his view.

Mr Cooke feels that by allowing sheep to remain on the Commons, the Verderers are permitting a loophole which will allow anyone to turn out sheep on the Forest. Mr Cooke then added that in his opinion the sheep are not legally depastured and that in the event of an accident a driver would not be liable to compensate the owner of a sheep for their loss.

The Official Verderer responded to Mr Cooke. He said that the Atlases which were drawn up by the Forestry Commission following the New Forest Act of 1964 only recorded the right of Pasture and Mast. They did not list all the other rights that existed at the time. This means the Verderers could not insist on the removal of sheep from the Commons. On the Forest the position is perfectly clear. The National Trust, which is the landowner, has permitted sheep to be turned out on its commons and the Verderers cannot challenge that.

Mr Cooke then returned to add that he believes that the National Trust gave all the rights of grazing to the Verderers. He then said that he would not pursue the matter any further in Open Court.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2012/6070 LATCHMORE STREAM RESTORATION

RESUME

The Court noted the concerns of Professor Shepherd and Mr John Fryer. It was decided to resume the matter for the next Court in order to allow an opportunity for counter or supporting Presentments to be heard at the next Open Court in the usual way.

2012/6071 SHEEP

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer felt that he had dealt with Mr Cooke's Presentment in Open Court. Mr Cooke told the Official Verderer after the Court that "that was the end of the matter".

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

Mr Street introduced Mr Richard Price, his newly appointed Assistant Land Agent.

2012/6072 WOODGREEN CRICKET CLUB PAVILION EXTENSION

RESUME

Both the Forestry Commission and the Court are concerned that the hard-standing in the form of paving slabs have been laid in front of the pavilion without consent, albeit that it would have been probably 20 years ago.

The Court wanted more time to consider the proposals and the matter is therefore resumed for the June meeting.

2012/6073 SWAN GREEN CRICKET CLUB

DISCHARGE

Whilst not a submission, the problem of lack of enforcement of conditions on sports clubs with facilities on the Open Forest was raised. By way of example, it was noted that Swan Green Cricket Club frequently leave machinery, a barbecue and a picnic table out where such equipment should be kept in the storeroom. Mr Street said he will take this up with the Club.

2012/6074 SOUTHERN GAS NETWORKS REPLACEMENT GAS MAIN – DISCHARGE
ARMSTRONG ROAD, BROCKENHURST

Southern Gas wishes to replace the gas main which has been identified as being under capacity and unable to cope with peak demand in the winter months. The replacement pipe is larger in diameter and will rectify the supply issues.

A location plan and overview plan of the proposed underground pipe route was provided. SGN has incorporated Natural England's working methods into their own working method statement, a copy of which was also provided.

The proposals were agreed subject to the usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2012/6075 MIRROR AT SHIRLEY HOLMES

DISCHARGE

The new occupiers of a property at Shirley Holmes are seeking retrospective consent for a parabolic mirror opposite the entrance to their garage. The Forestry Commission and the Court noted that the access to the garage, which was constructed by the previous occupants shortly before the property was sold, has very poor sight lines. This does not appear to have been taken into account when permission to build the new garage was granted by the planning authority.

It seems an unsafe entrance has been approved by the planning authority as apparently a condition of the consent is that the adjacent hedge may not be cut back.

Mr Street said the Forestry Commission is minded to refuse consent for the mirror and the Verderers concurred with this view. The application is therefore refused. It is felt the applicant could go back to the planning authority with a request to revise the conditions.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT

2012/6076 CAMPSITE OPENING TIMES AND WARDEN OCCUPATION TIMES RESUME
September

In the absence of the Deputy Surveyor this matter was resumed.

2012/6077 SEASONAL PITCHES ON CAMPSITES RESUME

It has been noted that one third to one half of the caravans on Denny Campsite appear to be unoccupied and they are assumed to be on 'seasonal pitches'. This is a dog free site which means that the longterm occupation of those pitches restricts other campers from camping in one of the few sites where dogs are not permitted which is felt by the Court to be a cause for concern.

The Forestry Commission was asked to confirm the rules on seasonal pitches.

2012/6078 BALMER LAWN ROAD BRIDGE & BRIDGE CARRYING THE MAIN RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN BROCKENHURST AND THE MARLPIT OAK CROSS ROAD. DISCHARGE

The Clerk advised that once the new depth gauges are in place under the Balmer Lawn Road bridge, the Highway Authority will consider removing the additional flood warning signs.

The Court felt the new signs on the approaches to the mainline bridge on the Sway to Brockenhurst road are unnecessary and should be removed. Puddles do accumulate under the bridge but it does not flood. Repairs to the road surface and a slight camber would mean water would run off. The Clerk will advise the Highway Authority accordingly.

Action
SW

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

With the exception of the Latchmore Stream Restoration works, there were no other restoration works to discuss at this meeting.

ENCROACHMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/6079 UPDATE ON ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

No new encroachments have been identified. Mr Street confirmed that he is dealing with those currently on the list. The fencing at Ashurst Lodge will be completed once the weather improves.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/6080 'BEAULIEU' LETTERS DISCHARGE

The historic 'Beaulieu' letters which were carved into the turf at Little Hatchet has been extensively restored. The work was carried out by the Volunteer Rangers without obtaining consent. The lettering dates back to before the First World War. The Volunteer Rangers have been advised that they must not undertake such works in future without prior approval.

2012/6081 ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE MARQUEE RESUME

A large marquee, measuring approximately 90 ft x 40 ft was erected on the campsite between the 3rd and 8th May. Mr Street said he would check the terms of the lease to see if this is allowed. Apparently the marquee was for an event presumably arranged by the campsite staff which included a hog-roast.

2012/6082 ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE ELECTRICAL SOCKETS DISCHARGE

There are several electric hook-ups approximately 20 metres from the pond and only about 6" off the ground. Concern was expressed about what would happen should the area flood. Mr Street assured the Court that the sockets will be RCD protected and that Forest Holidays would have made sure they are legal and do not represent a hazard to health and safety.

2012/6083 BOX GATE ON THE A326 DISCHARGE

Mr Maton commented that the box gate on the A326 opposite Netley View has been altered and is not large enough to get a horse through. The problem is a matter for discussion with the Highway Authority.

2012/6084 BRICKS ADJACENT TO LATCHMOOR (BROCKENHURST) POUND DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission was asked to arrange for the removal of a pallet of bricks which has been left close to the Pound at Latchmoor. It is thought they may be connected with Network Rail.

Action
MStr

2012/6085 CAMPSITE SURVEY RESUME

The Court reminded the Forestry Commission that the Deputy Surveyor had promised to confirm that the Campsite Survey commissioned by the New Forest Association represented a true and accurate record of the campsite and its infrastructure at the time the survey was undertaken. Mr Street agreed to ensure this matter is progressed without further delay.

Action
MStr

2012/6086 VERDERERS' OFFICE MOVE RESUME
June

Mr Street confirmed that The Cottage should be ready at the end of June.

Mr Street & Mr Price left the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2012/6087 PONY BLOODLINES SCHEME RESUME

Mr Deakin reported that of the 13 mares in the scheme, 6 have now given birth to colt foals, 2 have fillies and there are 4 left to foal. 1 mare is thought not to be in foal.

In due course the sub-committee will decide whether to recommend the scheme be run for a further year.

2012/6088 VERDERERS' ELECTION RESUME

The Electoral Reform Service has provided some cost estimates for running a Verderers' Election and further information will be requested.

Action
SW

2012/6089 STALLION INSPECTIONS RESUME

2012/6089 STALLION INSPECTIONS

RESUME

The Verderers are very concerned that they only had one 2 year old colt to look at this year. Commoners are complaining that whilst no-one wishes to reduce the quality of the stallions which are licensed there is concern that the NFPB&CS is too harsh and that the 'pass mark' has now been set unreasonably high for a native pony breed. A significant number of Commoners have made requests to the elected Verderers that they get involved in discussions with the Breed Society. As a result a meeting is being arranged with representatives of the Society.

Action
SW

2012/6090 VERDERERS' VETERINARY ADVISER

DISCHARGE

Mr Ralph Ellis MA, Vet MB, Cert.VR, MRCVS, has written to the Official Verderer explaining that he feels the time has come for him to step down as the Verderers' veterinary advisor. Mr Ellis explained that he has been retired from full time veterinary practice for some five years and he thinks it would be best if the role was taken by a veterinary surgeon with more active involvement in practice and the veterinary affairs of the Forest. The Court was sorry to hear that Mr Ellis has decided to retire but understood the reasons why he has come to that decision. The Official Verderer will write to Mr Ellis to thank him for the very valuable assistance he has provided to the Verderer over the years.

Action
OV

The Court agreed it is important that a replacement veterinary adviser is appointed and a suitable candidate has been identified. The Clerk has had a preliminary discussion with Mr Philip Hughes BVSc, MRCVS a Senior Partner at Priory Veterinary Group in Christchurch. Mr Hughes has indicated he would be happy to take on the role. Mr Maton proposed that Mr Hughes be invited to take up the role and this proposal was seconded by Mrs Thorne. The motion was carried unanimously. The Clerk will contact Mr Hughes to confirm his appointment.

Action
SW

2012/6091 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

DISCHARGE

Mr Montagu proposed BDO Stoy Hayward should continue as the Auditor to the Verderers of the New Forest. This was seconded by Mr Dave Readhead and the motion was carried unanimously.

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2012/6092 BOARD MEETING

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that a Board Meeting is scheduled for the 30th May.

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2012/6093 UPDATE ON THE VGS

RESUME

The Advisory Group met last week. The meeting agreed that a proposal for keeping animal numbers under control is required. Commoners sitting on the Advisory Group were asked to think about how this could be achieved. The rules can be changed from year to year as necessary.

Action
Commoners
on Advisory
Group

The VGS Management Committee met the day before the Court.

2012/6094 REFLECTIVE COLLARS FOR CATTLE RESUME

A request has been received for collars for cattle. The Clerk advised the Court that she has been in discussion with the supplier of the pony collars who is working on collars for cattle. They will be more expensive as some sort of fastening will be required as cattle have very large heads compared with the circumference of their necks and therefore elastic is not appropriate. It was confirmed that the cost of the collars will be met from the VGS.

Action
Clerk

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2012/6095 OFAC (OPEN FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE) DISCHARGE

It was reported that the burning programme went exceptionally well this winter.

2012/6096 LAG (LOCAL ACTION GROUP) DISCHARGE

The LAG met in early May. A couple of applications have been made for funding but further applications would be welcome. The funding can be for almost anything except projects which are directly livestock related.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS

2012/6097 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR APRIL 2012 RESUME

The financial statement for April 2012 was approved.

The Clerk was asked if in future she can combine the current and previous year's figures onto one sheet.

Action
SW

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2012/6098 HUMANE SLAUGHTERING INSTRUMENT DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission has kindly allowed the Agisters to take over several humane slaughtering instruments which it no longer requires. The weapons are newer than those presently in use by the Agisters and the provision of the new weapons is much appreciated. The old redundant weapons will be taken away by the police and destroyed.

TRAINING – No training is being undertaken at present.

HEALTH AND SAFETY - There are no health and safety issues at present.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2012/6099 SWAY MEMORIAL FIELD DISCHARGE

It was agreed that this matter should not be discussed any further for the time being, unless the Football Club or Parish Council make further representation, or until closer to the time that the present lease is due for renewal.

The Official Verderer will respond to the letter received recently from the Chairman of the CDA.

Action
OV

2012/6100 STEPS TO THE DOCK

DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead pointed out how unsteady the steps up to the Dock appeared to be this morning. The Clerk said she will advise the Forestry Commission.

Action
SW

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13.03 hrs.

James May

20th June 2012